

that beneficiaries and their families will want and will require to make informed choices. As the former executive director of the Illinois Council of Senior Citizens, I know that it will take hours with each beneficiary, many of them taking multiple medications, to fully explain private plan options and how each choice will affect their access to the drugs they need. A majority of beneficiaries lack regular access to a computer or have the ability to navigate websites. A recent HHS Inspector General's report found that 44 percent of callers to the Medicare hotline had difficulty accessing information. Many beneficiaries are frail, some suffer from dementia, and others are not English-proficient. We have to reach beneficiaries living in Centers for Independent Living, nursing homes and isolated areas. And, of course, we have to address the needs of the evacuees from Hurricane Katrina.

Tina Kitchin, director of the Oregon Department of Human Services, is not alone in saying "I don't know how Oregon will successfully do this within this timeframe." The State Health Insurance Program coordinator for McLean County, Illinois, is asking beneficiaries to call early because, "There are too many people for us to handle all of them on or after November 15," the first day that enrollment can begin. Already, the constituent advocates in my own district office have had difficulty getting answers to questions about how the new federal drug benefit will coordinate with our state's pharmaceutical assistance program. And already, we are seeing constituents who are confused, scared and angry about the inability to get answers to their questions while being pressured to make a fast decision.

It is time to recognize that the late enrollment penalty imposed in the Medicare Modernization Act is unfair to the 42 million beneficiaries who want to make informed choices, will not have access to unbiased assistance in making those decisions, but who will face substantial and permanent late enrollment fees if they don't act by May 15th. The Medicare Informed Choice Act will give beneficiaries the time they need to make the decision that is right for them.

Senior citizens and persons with disabilities will face obstacles in getting access to independent information, but they will be inundated with materials from private plans seeking customers. Beginning next month, Medicare beneficiaries and their families will be subjected to multi-million advertising campaigns by insurers. As reported in *The Wall Street Journal* ("Insurers Bet Big on New Drug Benefit," September 7, 2005), "The payoff could be big. The new drug benefit is expected to boost 2006 revenue at seven of the largest health insurers by at least \$4.45 billion in 2006, and lift earnings by 2 percent to 4 percent according to CIBC World Markets analyst Carl McDonald." Some companies expect increased profit levels of 4 percent to 6 percent.

The pressure to make a quick decision will be enormous, particularly when coupled with a sales pitch arguing that failure to choose will result in a permanent, financial penalty. Without adequate, independent and personalized counseling, many beneficiaries will make the wrong decision. Getting rid of the late enrollment fee is only part of the solution. Our bill will give all beneficiaries the opportunity to switch their plan and enroll in one that better meets their needs, whether they enrolled by mistake or because they succumbed to sales pressure.

Finally, there is massive confusion about how the new Medicare drug benefit will mesh with current retiree benefits. Unfortunately, a beneficiary's misunderstanding and enrollment in a Medicare drug plan could result in the loss of retiree benefits. Again the Medicare Informed Choice Act gives a one-year grace period to sort out confusion and correct any errors.

I urge my colleagues to support the Medicare Informed Choice Act so that we can protect our constituents from unfair penalties or the loss of retiree benefits.

TRIBUTE TO ELAINE K. FREEMAN

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to Elaine K. Freeman, Vice President of Corporate Communications for Johns Hopkins Medicine upon her retirement after 23 years. Elaine epitomizes what is best in corporate communications—she fully understands Johns Hopkins Medicine and she has the skills and ability to communicate the success of Hopkins to the public.

During her tenure, Elaine has seen Hopkins become nationally ranked as the number one medical facility in the nation, according to the U.S. News and World Report. In 1989, she also helped Hopkins celebrate its centennial as one of the Nation's most outstanding medical institutions.

Elaine is a gifted professional who understands that the strengths of Hopkins rest with its staff and faculty. Over the years, she has helped the public understand and relate to the important medical advances that come out of Hopkins, enabling people to understand the relationship between research and the impact on patients.

Elaine is unique in that she truly understands the medical community, and the importance of scientific research. She is married to Dr. John Freeman, Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics. In 1969, John joined Hopkins to create and direct the Johns Hopkins Child Neurology program.

In 1958, Elaine graduated from Goucher College as a Phi Beta Kappa. She also earned a masters degree from George Washington University. In 2001, she received the Excellence in Medical Education Public Affairs award from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

I urge my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in wishing Elaine Freeman a happy and healthy retirement. Her skill and dedication to communicating medical developments has helped the public gain a greater understanding of medical issues.

RECOGNIZING MARIA REZA

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to recognize a dear

friend and an outstanding educator, Maria Reza. In June 2005, Maria retired after 36 years of dedicated service to the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Maria believes that "to make a difference in the lives of our students, we must go beyond the classroom and work to improve the community and the environment in which they live." Throughout her career, Maria has embodied this belief and has dedicated her life to not only helping children learn in the classroom, but also to improving lives and conditions within our communities. Over the years, Maria has volunteered for the United Farm Workers, the Southwest Voter Registration Project and has devoted much of her life to serving the students and residents of the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

After graduating from San Fernando Valley State College, Maria started teaching at San Fernando High School in 1969. During her first year, she was recognized as "Intern of the Year" by the Los Angeles Unified School District Internship Program Office. In 1975, she was hired as a Resource Teacher in the Central Office and soon became District Home Economics Supervisor. She pioneered the Infant Study Program at Ramona, Roosevelt and Locke High Schools. This program continues to offer free childcare for high school age parents as well as provide them with valuable parenting skills.

As an assistant principal, Maria, along with a school nurse, Pam Wagner, established the first three school-based health clinics in LAUSD. The project faced much controversy and was opposed by some conservative organizations and churches. However, Maria knew the importance of providing health care to uninsured students and continued to work tirelessly to gain the support of students and parents. The proof of her efforts is overwhelmingly apparent today with over 40 school-based or school-linked clinics which provide a low cost, accessible form of health care. The demand for these programs continues to grow.

Among her many accomplishments, Maria Reza has distinguished herself as a strong female role model in the community. She has been recognized twice as "Woman of the Year," in 1992 by State Senator David Roberti and again in 1998 by State Senator Richard Alarcón. She was invited to participate in the HOPE, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, leadership training and this year chaired the Adelante Mujer Conference, giving 300 young women the opportunity to attend career workshops conducted by professional Latinas.

Maria also has the distinction of being married to my good friend Alex Reza, a retired educator and an extraordinary community activist whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for many years. She is also the mother of three sons, Lance, Roman and David.

Mr. Speaker, Maria has set an admirable example for those who are committed to making a difference in the lives of others. It is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Maria Reza, a woman whose dedication and achievements are a credit to our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF MERYL
MENASHE

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Meryl Menashe, who was recently named a Museum Teacher Fellow for the 2005–06 academic year by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Meryl, one of only fifteen teachers from across the Nation chosen to be a Museum Teacher Fellow this year, demonstrated extensive knowledge of Holocaust history, a record successful teaching experience, and a history of participation in community and professional organizations. She joins over 200 Museum Teacher Fellows in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's program, all of whom continue to serve as community leaders in Holocaust education.

As a Museum Teacher Fellow, Meryl will create an outreach project to bring Holocaust education to groups outside the walls of the traditional school environment. This may include distance learning, working with adult groups, or conducting programs in schools, the community, or other professional organizations. Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough the importance of Holocaust education. We must never forget. We must teach and remember the Holocaust because genocide is real. It is not history, it is reality.

Meryl will be returning to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum throughout the year for further training and to report on her outreach project. Once the 2005–06 academic year is over, she will continue to advance American Holocaust education by supporting future fellows, and, of course, continuing to lead the effort in our community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a great pride that I rise to commend Meryl Menashe. Her dedication to Holocaust education, a sad but necessary task, is extraordinary and she is well deserving of her appointment as a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Teacher Fellow. I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in honoring Meryl for her efforts and wishing her many more years of success.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT
COLONEL BAYARD "VIC" TAYLOR

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to an outstanding American who has given so much to our nation, yet asks for so little—former U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Bayard "Vic" Taylor.

Vic did not just wear the uniform of a United States Marine. From the beginning of his Marine Corps career, he lived the life of a Marine, dedicated to serving his country and improving the primary responsibility of each Marine—to understand and execute the tactics of the rifleman.

Vic first enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1957 and served in Hawaii and the Far East until

his release from military duty in 1960. With the war in Vietnam intensifying, he reenlisted in the Marine Corps in 1967 to fight during what many consider to be the war's darkest years. The Second Battalion, Fourth Marines were fortunate to have Vic as both a rifle platoon and company commander, where he was awarded the distinguished Silver Star, two Bronze Stars with Combat V, two Purple Hearts, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star.

In the jungles and battlefields of Vietnam, Vic quickly became familiar with intense and close quarter combat. Aside from leading a number of attacks against North Vietnamese Army fortifications along the Cua Viet River, he fought in the infamous battle for Dai Do. For many Vietnam veterans, the battle for Dai Do is not only a story of extreme heroism and courage, but also remains a testament to the brave men and fighting spirit of the United States Marine Corps. The victory at Dai Do can be credited to the extraordinary bravery, competence, initiative, toughness, and selflessness of individual Marines and small unit leaders like Vic Taylor who carried the day.

Vic's demonstrated knowledge of infantry tactics, techniques, and weaponry led to an assignment as an instructor at the Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, where he was later tasked with the responsibility of creating an improved Infantry Officer's Course (IOC). The need for such a course was predicated on the threat posed by our Cold War enemies and its purpose was to ensure Marines possessed the knowledge and training beyond basic infantry courses that were completed by officers in all occupational fields.

With the first class scheduled for May of 1977, Vic immediately gathered two equally creative and knowledgeable Marines, Terry Paul and Will Oler, as partners in this endeavor. They first determined the course should prepare newly acquainted infantry officers for the realities of combat. This meant managing a rifle platoon, obtaining increased weapons proficiency, and leading a rifle company in the event the Captain is either wounded or killed. However, during the course's development, it grew beyond expectations and featured not only tactics and weaponry, but also communications, demolitions, rough terrain skills and operations. While part of the instruction was derived from existing Marine Corps field manuals, much of it was original, drawn from Vic's personal experiences.

The IOC was completed on schedule and graduated its first class in June of 1977. The Marine Corps had a new Lieutenant, schooled to confront the dangers of combat and lead his fellow Marine through its peril.

The course has since increased in breadth and length, and rather than a six week curriculum as originally planned, it has expanded to 13 weeks and now includes an instructive desert operation course that has undoubtedly prepared our Marines for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Vic took great pride in knowing that this course would challenge each infantry officer with extreme circumstances and unique environments, similar to what he faced in the battle of Dai Do.

The infantryman shares a common bond that unlike many other service occupations, strengthens amongst trial and adversity. Their necessity, coupled with their sacrifice, should never be forgotten in the minds of Americans

and will surely never be forgotten in the mind of the Marine. For each distinguished graduate leaving the IOC, nothing is more appropriate than expressing appreciation for this type of warrior's accomplishment than honoring him with tools of the trade. Knowing that the respect and history of the infantry lives in its weaponry, Vic thought it essential to provide each distinguished IOC graduate with a .45 caliber automatic Colt pistol—the weapon he often resorted to in combat and the weapon many of these Marines will continue to rely on in similar circumstances. He took it upon himself and endowed the Marine Corps University Foundation to maintain this distinguished award in perpetuity, citing each of these Marines as "the Lieutenant I'd most like to have on my flank."

Mr. Speaker, President Ronald Reagan once said, "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference. The Marines don't have that problem." While I fully believe this to be true, I also feel that it is the service and dedication of Marines like Vic Taylor that validates this statement. Without his contribution and concern, it is likely that our fighting men and women on the ground would not have the knowledge and experience they possess today.

Despite Vic's retirement from the military in 1985, his leadership and guidance continues to serve the Marine Corps and will do so for years to come. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in giving the thanks and respect Bayard "Vic" Taylor deserves for his service to the Marine Corps and to our nation.

CONGRATULATING CWA PRESIDENT
MORTON BAHR ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend Morton "Morty" Bahr, on his retirement as President of the Communications Workers of America after over 50 years of service to the union and the nation.

Morty Bahr has been with CWA for longer than I have been in Congress, and together we have fought and won many battles on behalf of working men and women. After his service as a radio operator for the Merchant Marine during World War II, Morty joined CWA in 1951 as an in-plant organizer for Mackay Radio and Telegraph in New York. In 1957, he joined the staff of CWA and succeeded in his first assignment: organizing 24,000 plant workers at New York Telephone. He later served as vice president of District 1 covering New York, New Jersey and New England, and was elected CWA president in 1985.

When Morty assumed the top leadership role, CWA was still reeling from the breakup of the AT&T Bell System, a system that employed half a million union workers. After the split, both labor and management recognized that workers would need to develop new skills to remain competitive within AT&T and throughout the industry. Under Morty's leadership, the union formed the Alliance for Competitive Growth and Development, an innovative partnership dedicated to the career success of each individual union-represented